

# Coming Home

**Hints and tips to help you  
& your registered dog after being released**

# Coming Home

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## **Responsible ownership - legal requirements**

Your dog has been registered under the terms and conditions as legally specified, Owners will receive full details from the Index of Exempted Dogs and should contact them directly if you have any questions.

Under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (DDA), the following provisions and requirements apply to the types of dog that are specially controlled under section 1 of the act. Any person who contravenes **any** of the following provisions may be brought back before the court and have their dog re seized and should it be the decision of the court, destroyed.

### **Requirements for Certificate of Exemption:**

- The Certificate of Exemption remains valid for the life of the dog, provided that the requirements attached to it are observed. These requirements are:
- That the dog is kept at the same address as the person to whom the certificate is issued save for any 30 days in a 12-month period;
- To notify the Agency of any proposed change of address
- To notify the Agency of the death or export of the dog;
- To satisfy the Agency that a policy of third-party insurance compliant with article 8 is in force;
- To keep the dog muzzled and on a lead when in a public place i.e. it must be muzzled and held on a lead by someone who is at least 16. A car is classified as a public place and as such your dog must remain muzzled and on lead inside a vehicle, even if privately owned by you.
- To keep the dog in sufficiently secure conditions to prevent its escape. [please ensure windows on all floors are kept closed or only opened partially. Restrictors can be fitted to ensure the window cannot be opened beyond a few inches]
- To provide access to the dog for the purpose of reading a microchip on request by a person specified in section 5(1) of the Act.
- To produce to a person specified in section 5(1) of the Act confirmation that third-party insurance compliant with article 8 is in force within five days of being requested to do so by that person;
- To produce to a person specified in section 5(1) of the Act the certificate issued under article 9 within five days of being requested to do so by that person.
- You shall not abandon your dog or allow it to stray. Nor shall you sell or give your dog away, nor advertise it for sale or gift

# Health & Welfare

## Things to consider when you get your dog back home

1. Ask the authorities to send any medical records to your vet. Your vet will need to know if your dog has received any treatment or given any medication whilst in custody. This includes any vaccinations and worming treatments that may have been given to puppies.
2. Your dog(s) will have undergone neutering (if not already neutered) and tattooing before being released. Keep a close eye on your dog for any unusual behaviour or distress and go to your vet if at all concerned. If your dog has recently had surgery, try and keep them quiet for a few days and limit exercise.
3. Kennelling affects different dogs in different ways, some soon settle in to a new environment whilst others do not cope so well. Almost certainly whilst your dog has been away it will have been fed a different food to what you would have fed at home. When you change a dog's diet there is always the possibility that it will upset the dog's system and the dog will suffer from loose motions or diarrhoea. A sudden change of diet combined with the excitement of coming home may cause upset. If this is the case with your dog, try initially feeding bland food – e.g., chicken and rice. Everyone will obviously be very excited to have the family member back home-but do limit the number of treats etc given as a sudden intake may also cause upset. If you are at all worried about any aspects of your dog's health, take your dog to the vet to be checked out.
4. Check the size and condition of your dog's collar. Puppies may have grown and older dogs may have lost weight. Make sure the collar is adjusted properly and get a new one if it looks damaged. Don't forget that it is a legal requirement to have an ID tag attached to your dog's collar.
5. Your dog may need help with adjusting from a kennel environment back into a home, be patient and re-establish a familiar routine, toilet training may have lapsed whilst in the kennel, follow our guide to help with this.
6. Whatever you think about the Dangerous Dogs Act it is unfortunately the law. Don't let your dog down by not following the rules.

# House Training

If your dog has been kept in Kennels or any other strange surroundings for a period of time it is possible that they may become confused about the housetraining rules and you may have to re-train them.

Also, some puppies being returned may not have finished their House Training and you'll have to start over again.

Train or Retrain your dog by taking them outside every hour to give them the chance of going to the toilet in the right place. When they go, give them lots of praise and reward their good behaviour with a treat.

Take them out straight away after sleeping, first thing in the morning, last thing at night and following a meal.

Keep a sharp eye on your dog if they have not "been" for a while and at the first sign that they may be considering it, get them outside quickly and encourage them to go. Young dogs or dogs that have been away for a while can feel insecure so stay with them while they go. Let them know that you are not going to leave them.

Never punish your dog for having an accident in the house. They will not have done it on purpose and you could make the problem worse.

If they do make a mistake, clean it up quickly, thoroughly and without fuss. Use a biological washing powder or special pet cleaner. Do not use ammonia based cleaners as these will smell like urine to the dog and encourage them to go in the same place again.

# Settling In

If your dog has been held away from its normal home for any length of time it is possible that your dog may be feeling insecure.

To help settle your dog in over the next few weeks here are some tips to re-build your dog's confidence in you.

- 1 Do not try and force acceptance of the muzzle on your dog. Take it easy building up over time and follow our advice.
- 2 Do not force your dog out on walks until they are happy with the muzzle.
- 3 Let your dog rest and sleep as much as it needs for the first few days.
- 4 When your dog wants to go and sleep, leave them to it. Don't pester the dog. Let them make the first move.

# Muzzle Training

Muzzles can be used to reduce the risk a dog poses to people and other animals by restricting the dog's ability to bite. They are frequently used by veterinarians, dog wardens and animal shelter staff concerned with handling or treating frightened, injured or distressed dogs.

They may also be used by the owners of dogs that may be aggressive to people or other animals, or those bound by a control order to do so, either because the dog has previously acted dangerously, or is of a banned breed type.

Dogs which have had a bad experience that they associate with their muzzle, such as one that is too tight or restrictive, or one that has been rushed into acceptance of the muzzle as in the case of dogs seized under the Dangerous Dogs act may require even more time and patience.

Below is a guide to help you to select a muzzle and introduce it to your pet. Remember, the way you introduce a muzzle to your dog can have a significant impact on how quickly he will accept wearing it calmly.

## **What type of muzzle should I buy for my dog?**

It is important to purchase a muzzle that allows normal breathing, panting and drinking, and in the case of those dogs restricted under the DDA and who therefore would breach a court order if it were to be removed whilst in public, to allow their dogs to be sick should they need to be.

Basket style muzzles (Baskerville), fulfil these requirements allowing your dog to be comfortable during regular outdoor activity. That said, no muzzle should be worn for a long period of time.

Best Behaviour does not regard alternative styles of muzzles as appropriate for regular use because they restrict the dog's ability to pant, trapping heat inside the dog's body, and prevent the dog from being able to drink water which increasing the dog's vulnerability to overheating and heatstroke. However the lightweight fabric or leather muzzles can be useful for a short time during vet visits or nail clipping sessions.

### **How do I know if the muzzle fits my dog properly?**

Basket style muzzles are available in different sizes designed to fit a wide range of dog breeds.

You can use size guides from the manufacturer as a general guideline, but you will need to place the muzzle on your dog to determine whether a particular size properly fits your dog's head.

This may not always be possible particularly if your dog has been seized in which case telephone the prosecuting authority either directly or via your legal representative to ask them to give you the size required. You need your muzzle with you when your dog is released as the police station is a public place and you will not be allowed to remove your dog without it.

A properly fitted basket muzzle should have a strap that sits snugly against your dog's neck. The strap needs to be tight enough to hold the muzzle in place and prevent your dog from pawing it off, but there should be space for about two fingers to slip between the strap and your dog's neck.

The length and width of the muzzle's "basket" also needs to be appropriate for the length and width of your dog's nose. There should be about 1.25 cm (0.5 in.) of space between the end of your dog's nose and the front of the muzzle's interior.

Once you've found a muzzle that fits your dog snugly, it's important to routinely check for any signs that your dog is experiencing discomfort. Although it is natural for your dog to be somewhat uncomfortable wearing the muzzle initially, there should be no outward signs of this such as chafing, skin irritation or similar injury.

You should also check the fit of the muzzle regularly as the muzzle strap may stretch and require adjustment.

### **How can I help my dog adjust to wearing a muzzle?**

Below are some steps to help your dog learn to accept wearing a muzzle. Be patient, and work at a rate that is comfortable for your pet. Most dogs will adjust to the muzzle within a few days to a few weeks. The first steps should be taken in the home or garden to allow your dog to become accustomed to the muzzle in an environment without external influences and distractions. Only once your dog is completely comfortable wearing the muzzle should you begin to generalize your dog to other surroundings and situations.

### **1. Try to make your dog's first experience with the muzzle positive.**

Show your dog the muzzle. While he's investigating it give him a treat. After feeding the treat put the muzzle away or out of sight. Repeat this sequence several times, or until your dog looks at you for a treat as soon as you show the muzzle. If at all possible your dog's introduction to the muzzle should not be in a fearful or stressful situation.

### **2. Encourage your dog to place his head in the muzzle by luring with treats.**

With the muzzle facing your dog, hold or place treats on the inside rim and encourage your dog to take them. If your dog readily takes the treats, start holding or placing the treats further inside the muzzle so that your dog must stick his head deeper into the muzzle to retrieve the treats.

### **3. Increase the time your dog wears the muzzle without fastening it.**

Place the muzzle on your dog's head for a couple seconds and feed a treat while the muzzle is still on. Slowly increase the time your dog is wearing it from several seconds to several minutes while rewarding your dog with treats. Remove the muzzle when your dog is calm and quiet.

### **4. Try fastening the muzzle and increase the time he wears it.**

When your dog calmly accepts the muzzle you can try fastening it for increasing lengths of time until he will comfortably wear it for fifteen or twenty minutes. To help your dog adjust to the muzzle more quickly reward him with play, affection, treats, or walks – or other activities your dog enjoys – while he is wearing the muzzle. This will distract your dog and help him to positively associate wearing the muzzle with activities he finds fun. Try to remove the muzzle when your dog is calm. Taking off the muzzle when your dog is struggling to remove it himself will encourage him to repeat the behaviour because he may think it's his actions that prompt the muzzle being removed. You can encourage him to leave it alone temporarily by providing a distraction (for example, asking for a sit and treating, clapping your hands, squeaking a squeaky toy, or with a ball).

Take care not to expect too much too soon. If this is the case go back a step and take things more slowly.

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## Useful Contacts

Deed Not Breed Advice Lines	07873 666 778 07873 666 779	<a href="http://www.deednotbreed.org.uk">www.deednotbreed.org.uk</a>
The Bull Breed Advisory Service	01204 705951 07835 865219	<a href="http://www.bullbreedadvisoryservice.com">www.bullbreedadvisoryservice.com</a>
Roland Robison Fenton's Solicitors	01253 621432	Dog Law Solicitor Kathryn Jamieson Sinclair
Best Behaviour Canine Behaviourists	07835 865219	<a href="http://www.best-behaviour.com">www.best-behaviour.com</a>
Other useful numbers:		
Vet – regular		
Vet – out of hours		
Local Dog Warden		
Microchip number		
Index of Exempted Dogs	0207 238 1506	PO Box 68250 London SW1P 9XG

This guide has been produced jointly by Deed Not Breed and The Bull Breed Advisory Service who will on request provide free support and advice for the life of your dog.

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